



The E-Gobrecht

The Electronic Newsletter of the LIBERTY SEATED COLLECTORS CLUB

Liberty Seated
Collectors Club

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Outpouring over Jim O'Donnell's Death

Email from Al Kaip: I considered Jim O'Donnell a good friend of mine. He got me started in LSCC. We would always swap stories when he came to the Michigan State show at Thanksgiving. I missed him the last few years and now I'll miss him forever. Not his smile, nor his stories--I'll always have them.

He sold me an 1855 dollar in Good....a picture perfect good...a great planchet with even wear. Also an 1873-CC no arrows half AU and an 1846 over horizontal 6 EF-45. Great memories, Great coins and a Great Guy.

Email from Bob Hammond: Hello Bill and fellow Liberty Seated Collectors Club members.

To all those who knew, worked with, associated with, bought from, and valued our fraternal partner in numismatics, Jim O'Donnell, I extend my sincere condolences.

He is among those who tendered my numismatic education for several decades and assisted me in my collecting habits, Lib-

erty Seated. My Bride (Shirley) and I enjoyed much conversation with Jim. He is sorely missed by us.

Thanks, Bill, for informing us of Jim's demise. Also, thanks to all who make this newsletter possible. At least on a monthly basis, club members may 'get together' and reflect on people, places, and things ... Liberty Seated.

Email from Arno Safran: I am saddened to learn of the passing of Jim O'Donnell. Like many of us Seated Liberty enthusiasts, Jim and I go back quite a number of years. On a teacher's budget, Jim managed to put me into some nice transitionals such as the **1840 tilted and upright shield dimes**, **1873 with arrows & no arrows halves** (closed three, unfortunately) and a lovely **1846 half dime** among other better date coins. He even put me into an **1840 medium letters Seated half** out explaining its origin and how underrated a coin it was. Years later I would upgrade it at Dick Osburn's table.

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The E-Gobrecht is a twice award winning electronic publication of the Liberty Seated Collectors Club (LSCC). The LSCC is a non-profit organization dedicated to the attributions of the Liberty Seated Coin series. The LSCC provides the information contained in this email newsletter from various sources free of charge as a general service to the membership and others with this numismatic interest. You do not have to be a LSCC member to benefit from this newsletter; subscription to the E-Gobrecht is available to anyone. All disclaimers are in effect as the completeness and/or accuracy of the information contained herein cannot be completely verified. Contact information is included at the end.



Auction News

by
Jim Gray

The Stack's 73rd Anniversary Sale contained an almost complete set of Liberty

Seated Dollars, including the 1870-S. The only coin that was lacking was the 1851 Dollar. Unfortunately, even though most of the coins were in higher grades, almost all were impaired by cleaning, damage, repairs, etc.

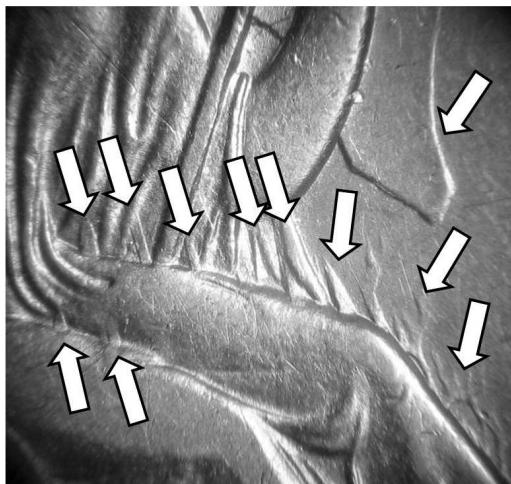
The coins of note were as follows: a cleaned 1852 original Dollar in MS-60 sold for \$23,000. An 1870-S Dollar in VF-30 but with the obverse extensively tooled and reengraved and formerly in the collection of F.C.C. Boyd sold for \$120,750. An 1871-CC Dollar in XF-40 and the best quality of all the coins in the sale sold for \$8,625 and a cleaned XF-40 duplicate sold for \$5,865. A cleaned 1872-CC Dollar in AU-55 sold for \$7,187 and a sharply struck duplicate in AU-50, cleaned and tooled but still having a decent

appearance sold for \$6,037. A third piece in cleaned VF-20 sold for \$2,645. A cleaned 1873-CC in AU-50 with streaky toning and not very attractive realized \$13,800.

The Heritage October Sale featured a very nice 1838-O half-dime in MS-62 and choice for the grade went \$5,175. An attractive 1846 half dime in XF-45 realized \$4,025.

A very attractive 1838-O dime with no rim cuds in AU-58 went for \$2,185 and an 1845-O dime in XF-45 did not sell. An original 1856-S dime in VF-35 sold for \$1,380 and a cleaned and porous 1874-CC dime in XF-40 still managed \$17,250.

A cleaned 1873-CC quarter in XF-40 with a decent appearance managed a strong \$9,775 and an attractive 1870-CC half in VF-35 hit \$13,800.



**Check out the clash marks on the obverse of this
1867-S Half Dollar !**

Do you have a Liberty Seated Half Dollar with more extensive clash marks?



Question of the Month

Topics for e-Discussion by Paul Kluth

Big Time Current Events...

The Stock Market has fallen off drastically and specific large banks are in trouble. Investments and retirement funds have seen steep declines in value recently. Will any Fed bailout actually work? The economic experts are predicting “recession” and possible “depression”.

What does your Crystal Ball say? What do you think is going to happen to the coin market in general? Are coin values and the price of precious metals going to decline too? Or is this a good time for investing in rare coins, numismatics in general, and precious metals as values are going up?

The person with the most accurate crystal ball gets to make the right call!

All responses are welcome! Please give us your thoughts and opinions. Send your reply to the E-Gobrecht editor at wb8cpy@arrl.net.

Nominations for 2009 Hall of Fame

After this year's memorable ceremony where John McCloskey and Kam Ahwash were the first to be inducted into the LSCC's Hall of Fame, the Hall of Fame committee is pleased to announce that it is accepting nominations for the Liberty Seated Collector Club's 2009 Hall of Fame. Eligible nominees include club members who have made significant contributions to expanding the literature on Seated coinage, who have built an important collection of Liberty Seated coinage, or who have served in a leadership position while contributing to the success of LSCC. Please send your nominations to the Hall of Fame Committee Chairman, Jim Gray, at jgray67@carolina.rr.com and include the nominee's name and a short narrative on why you feel this individual should receive this honor. Deadline for 2009 nominations is December 31, 2008.





Answers to Last Month's Question

Topics for e-Discussion by Paul Kluth

Here is a multifaceted question this month. Tell us about your ANA Baltimore experience!

Whether you are a collector and/or dealer, what was your favorite acquisition in Baltimore? No need to share what you paid or where you got it because that's your trade secret of course. And if it be the case, it's okay to describe even a "non-Liberty Seated" purchase...well just this one time.

What was your favorite "Liberty Seated" collecting activity during the Convention besides attending the LSCC Annual Meeting? Also, what can be done to improve your Liberty Seated collecting enjoyment at future regional meetings/shows?

From Ross Bailey: My favorite liberty seated activity (after the LSCC meeting) at the Baltimore ANA show was to hang out at Dick Osburn's table and talk coins with Dick, Randy, Bill and the multitudes that visit Dick's table.

My big acquisition at the ANA was a Mexican 8 reales that I purchased from Louis Hudson R.C. (Yes there is life after your liberty seated collection has been completed. I've been branching out into Mexican colonial coinage and Russian rubles.) The coin has beautiful original tone and luster, very rare on these issues. The fact that it had a couple of tiny pin scratches that will probably keep it from certifying couldn't dampen my enthusiasm.

From Dennis Fortier: The 2008 ANA convention in Baltimore was my first ANA convention as well as my first LSCC meeting. I was really looking forward to both the convention and the club meeting. I am glad to say they both lived up to my expectations. The Bourse was huge, and to get through it as a first timer it was necessary for me to concentrate on Seated Halves exclusively. I was able to see several rare issues and varieties. I added a very nice 1872-CC LS half dollar and an 1873 quad stripe LS half dollar to my collection.

My local club wants to get more young collectors interested in numismatics. I attended a symposium on Youth in Numismatics and learned what we have to do to accomplish our goal. I hope the knowledge gained will be helpful in that regard.

The LSCC meeting was particularly interesting and fun for me. I got to meet several of our noted Numismatists and Authors. I found them all to be very friendly, helpful, and informative. It was nice to see Kam Ahwash and John McCloskey receive their due recognition and become the first two inductees into the LSCC Hall of fame. I am looking forward to future club meetings and conventions.

From Paul Kluth: From a favorite dealer, I picked up a nice pair of 1843 L.S. Half Dimes

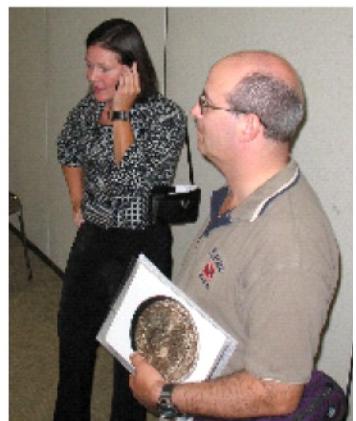
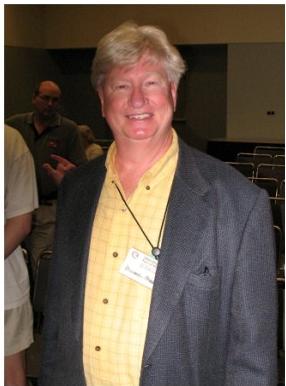
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in nice grade. One a V-5A with the obverse shattered die and the other a V-4 with a reverse shattered die. I always find it enjoyable at shows/major conventions the opportunity to discuss a particular variety or die stage with another knowledgeable collector or LSCC member. Sharing excitement over coins that are mutually appreciated is always a blast for any collector. [By the way, I dislike having to answer my own questions, but if most e-subscribers forget to send in their replies, I might have to put in my two cents worth as a filler...]

More Photos from the 2008 LSCC Annual Meeting





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Jim was a trusting sort of guy, especially if he thought you were a serious numismatist. He once allowed me to take home '[the one that got away](#)', a magnificent 1853/53 no arrows quarter in a PCGS-62 holder. It was mine for \$2,900. [We're talking 15 to 16 years ago.] The best I could do was photograph the piece, but at the time, I couldn't afford it and regrettably had to return it. I should have found a way!

One could not stop by Jim's table without receiving an important lesson in Numismatics and best of all were his Show & Tell sessions, the most memorable, seeing his set of [1870cc, 1871cc, 1872cc and 1873cc with arrows quarters](#); all in Gem BU or close to it. He was a "oner" and we all will miss him.

Email from [Frank Leone](#): The passing of Jim O'Donnell is such sad news. He was among the great folks that return as much to the hobby as they have received. Jim always made time for anyone that stopped at his table and each visitor surely benefited from the time spent with Jim. I'll surely miss him.

[The following quotes are a sampling from the PCGS message board that Len and I thought would be worthwhile repeating in the E-Gobrecht.]

PCGS message board from [Len Augsburger](#): O'Donnell was always one of the mandatory tables to visit at the major shows, and I will miss him. He never touched a computer and insisted on doing business the old-fashioned way until the end, relying on his well established network and customer base. He was the guy that never changed, who had lived in the same East-side apartment for forty years. He loved to recount past transactions and

great coins he had handled; and while you weren't always 100% sure you were getting the straight scoop it was always very entertaining.

PCGS message board from [Mowgli](#): I never realized how many coins I bought from Jim until I went through my coin folder looking at the receipts written on the back of his business cards. He sold me a lot of seated coins but he specialized in rarities of all kinds - like the 1815 half, 1913-S dime and an 1880 business strike nickel that I also purchased from him. He was a character and as many of you that know him, I have heard many of his coin stories repeatedly. The last time I saw him was in Baltimore where we had a conversation along with John Frost (of BCCS fame). It is now burned in my memory. I had many long conversations with him over the years. I'll miss him.

PCGS message board from [Numisma](#): Very sad news. I bought and sold early type with him at shows. He had a great eye for the early stuff and was truly knowledgeable. I too witnessed one of his seizures. It was at the Santa Clara show about 4 years ago. Scary scene. Rest-In-Peace, Jim..... You were one of the good guys and will always be remembered as such.

PCGS message board from [Mr Half Dime](#): This is very sad news indeed. Jim was a great friend and a mentor of sorts to me. I have known Jim for perhaps twenty years, and I never passed up the opportunity to sit and chat with him, to marvel at his many stories, and to learn yet more about the Liberty Seated series which he knew so well.

When I first met Jim O'Donnell, a mutual friend introduced us, introducing me to Jim

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as "an expert in Liberty Seated half dimes". I was mortified. Whatever I might have known about half dimes paled in comparison with what Jim had learned over his many years as a dealer. Jim looked at me with a doubting stare, and decided to quiz me on the spot to see if I was, in fact, an expert. He asked "Which of the Civil War Philadelphia dates (1863, 1864, 1865, 1866, and 1867) was the rarest?" I hesitated because I knew that most 'experts' at that time deemed the 1864 to be the rarest, but I did not agree, yet was reluctant to express my theory when being quizzed. I haltingly answered "Well, most people would probably say the 1864 was the rarest, but I think it is the 1865". Jim smiled, extended his hand, and said "You really are an expert, aren't you." From that moment on, Jim and I became best of friends.

I recently sent Jim a letter about a coin he had that I was interested in, as I knew that he did not have a computer, did not email, and virtually never answered a telephone call despite the many business cards he had given me over the years. I never received an answer. Sadly, now I know why.

Yes, it was difficult to watch Jim when he had an epileptic seizure, but he tried to never let that get him down, and quickly regained his composure and resumed life as normally as he could afterwards. He was sincere, friendly, fair and honest, and I always enjoyed my many dealings with him, and particularly our many numismatic discussions. The hobby has lost one of its giants, and he will be sorely missed.

PCGS message board from roaddrunner: I had heard rumor of this unfortunate news last week but was hoping it was not true. Jim was always a gentleman and often was at odds with the slick methods of selling and

buying coins that had come to pass over the last 20 years. But he always remained true to his old time roots. The stories he told of what he ran across in the 1950's, 60's and 70's was always worth the listen. With Kam Ahwash and other old timers gone, Jim was one of a vanishing breed of collectors that thought much differently about coins than most do today. While he knew the value of a buck better than almost anyone, he didn't make that the primary focus, at least not with me. I valued all the insights he gave me over the years. There were many specific times in the 80's and 90's when the market was slow at major shows when the only thing to look forward to was chatting with Jim about "seated." Every time I flip through old auction catalogs like Norweb for example, I see coins that Jim bought, such as his Norweb 1871-CC quarter in MS64 for what was a bargain price (\$26K). He knew how to spot value and hold on to it until the market value caught up with him. I'm sure that exasperated many a dealer looking to score on him. I wonder how many, if any, ever did.

I remember my last coin transaction with Jim where I flipped him an undamaged 1873-CC dime in G/VG that I had bought at a local shop. While I made a fair profit on that coin I left 50-100% "on the table" as a way to say thanks for all the information he shared with me over the years. We didn't discuss anything about the deal so he was not aware why I was leaving him plenty of room. He probably thought he took advantage of me that day but in hindsight, it was me who got the lion's share because of what I learned from him.

We'll miss you, Jim.



[With permission of the author, the following article is reprinted from the
Aiken, SC CSRA Coin Club's October 2008 newsletter.]

Collecting Short Sets by Type – Liberty Seated

By Arno Safran



An 1836 Gobrecht Dollar J-60 Original

The genesis of the Liberty Seated type silver coins goes back to 1835 when Mint Director Robert Maskell Patterson asked then Chief Engraver William Kneass to prepare a pattern for the resumption of a new silver dollar. Patterson wanted the new coin type to be modeled after the Britannia motif used on English coinage. Painters Thomas Sully and Titian Peale were invited to prepare sketches along the lines Patterson desired but before Kneass got very far, he suffered a “debilitating” stroke and was replaced by his assistant Christian Gobrecht. The new Chief engraver made a number of patterns based on the sketches of Sully and Peale that produced a Liberty Seated figure within an open field for the obverse and a soaring eagle in a sea of stars with the Legend UNITED STATES OF AMERICA on the reverse. 1,000 proof Gobrecht dollars were released on December 31, 1836 and another 600 on March 31, 1837 still with the 1836 date but under a different alignment. President Andrew Jackson and other dignitaries were given presentation pieces with the rest placed into circulation. During 1837 the same Gobrecht obverse type was used for the dime and half dime but the eagle was removed from the reverse and replaced by a laurel wreath. When the Liberty Seated design was introduced on the quarter in 1838 and on the half dollar the following year, the design was again modified. Stars were placed around the central device but inexplicably, the old John Reich Spread Eagle type was restored replacing the soaring eagle on the reverse. Finally, in 1840, these same changes were added to the dollar denomination.

Collecting a Short Set of Liberty Seated Types



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A Short Set comprising the first phase of Liberty Seated obverses and reverses

**1839 5¢, 1853 arrows at date 10¢, 1849 25¢ no motto
1854-O arrows at date-no motto 50¢ & 1863 \$1.00 no motto**

It is a pity that Gobrecht's outstanding original design type was not left as it was. While the *no stars* design is arguably more attractive than the *with stars* surrounding Miss Liberty on the obverse, the removable of the majestic soaring eagle in a sea of stars on the reverse in favor the old Spread Eagle design was inexcusable and more likely due to functionality triumphing over aesthetics. Shown above and directly below are the basic major types of the first phase of Liberty Seated coinage.

The first phase of Liberty Seated coinage ran from 1837 thru 1860 for the half dimes and dimes and from 1838 through 1865-66 for the quarters, half dollars and dollars. The obverses of the minor silver denominations display the 13 stars around Liberty and a laurel wreath on the reverse. The first phase of the three larger denominations is represented on the reverses by the absence of the motto, IN GOD WE TRUST. There were numerous sub-types introduced along the way but for one on a modest discretionary income, the five Liberty Seated coins shown on column one feature relatively common dates grading AU-50 to AU-58 and are still modestly priced in that range.

Liberty Seated Phase 2 Coinage



The Obverses of the *with legend* obverse and *with motto* reverse

1872-S 5¢, 1870 10¢, 1875-S 20¢, 1891 25¢, 1871 50¢ and 1873 \$1.00

In 1860, the half dime and dime received a partial face lifting. The 13 stars were removed from the obverse and replaced by the legend UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. The laurel wreath was supplanted by a wreath comprised of corn, cotton, tobacco and wheat. In 1866, the motto, IN GOD WE TUST was inserted above the eagle on the reverse of the three larger coins and in 1875, a new 20¢ piece denomination was struck to enable merchants in the western territories to make change using silver rather than nickel. (**The 5¢ nickel was not popular in this area.**) It was short lived but represents a particular place in US coinage lore.

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Collecting a Short Set of Liberty Seated Types



An 1873 Liberty Seated 50¢ with arrows grading AU-58

Of the six Liberty seated denominations, it is the half dollar that comes closest to realizing Gobrecht's original artistic conception as it appears to have been little altered except for the 13 stars being added to the obverse field.

In 1840 Robert Ball Hughes an engraver from England was brought into the Philadelphia Mint to help "improve" the original designs Gobrecht prepared. Many numismatists share the opinion that he actually weakened the design by enlarging the head while widening (or flattening out) the appearance of the seated figure. Other questionable changes involved reducing the size of the rock at the lower left while increasing the size of the scroll across the shield. Besides adding drapery to Miss Liberty's gown (**between her left elbow and waist**) on the half dimes and dimes of 1840, Hughes also rearranged the shield from a slanted to an upright position further weakening the design. Ironically it is these very questionable modifications that have created numerous obverse and reverse sub-types for the more ardent collectors of Liberty Seated coinage to consider.



Obverses of an 1838 dime and 1849 dime compared.

Notice the shield positions, the sizes of the head, the lack of drapery under Liberty's left arm on the 1838 and the added drapery on the 1849, and finally the date sizes of each coin.

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Unlike Bust and Barber Liberty coinage, the slender Seated Liberty type does not look particularly attractive in the lower grades. Wear is first noticeable along the upper leg just above the knee where flatness can be observed over a long area on specimens grading as high as AU-50. Below VF-30 the type loses much of its eye appeal. Problem-free common date coins grading EF-40 to AU-58 are considered "Best Buys".

For years collectors shunned the Liberty Seated series in favor of the Bust types that preceded it or the Barber silver and Morgan dollar issues that followed. Today, there is a very large collector base supported by a national organization called the Liberty Seated Collectors Club. It produces a prize winning quarterly publication called the *Gobrecht Journal* that has published over 100 issues since its founding.

Subscriber Correspondence

From **Ross Bailey**: *[Editor, Ross didn't know it but he answered this month's question a month early!]*...I think overall rare coins are going to do better than the stock market for the foreseeable future. I believe they will also outperform gold (bullion). The two things that I believe are fueling the rare coin market today are the third party grading services and the internet. TPGs make rare coins more of a commodity, and allow buyer and seller to make a deal with some confidence, without the intervention of a dealer. But it's the internet that has really transformed the rare coin market. Again, the internet has replaced the "network of dealers" that used to be needed for you to find that rare coin you were looking for. About a year ago, I had a dealer offer to look for an 1878-S half dollar for me and when I thought about it, I couldn't think of a reason to take him up on his offer. I felt confident that I

could just as easily find it myself, and I certainly didn't want to find us bidding against each other in some auction.

From **Jim Gray** (*reference the 1847 quarter dollar question in the September issue*): Bill. I agree with you and Len re: the original quarter. If anyone tampers with that coin, I hope their fingers rot off.

From **Julian Leidman** (*reference the 1847 quarter dollar question in the September issue*): Before dipping this coin, try using some odorless mineral spirits applied with a Q-tip. This will remove grease and grime and other surface contaminants. You should find that you do not need to do anything else. Pat it dry with an old t-shirt. Best Wishes.

Wanted: Good stories or recollections of John McCloskey

From **Len Augsburger**: We will be running a biography of John McCloskey in a future edition of the *Gobrecht Journal*. I am collecting related stories or recollections of the membership, please email any input to leonard_augsburger@hotmail.com.



Information Wanted

I'm currently working on the large task of cataloging the known seated half dime errors known to collectors by date/mintmark. If you own any seated half dime errors, please send me an e-mail at the address below and provide the following information to make this survey as accurate as possible:

- Date and Mintmark of coin
- Type of error
- Grade
- Certification service if graded
- Photographs of both sides of the coin (if possible)

Information about any known errors including blank planchets is welcomed. The results will be published in an article at the end of this year. Dennis Hengeveld, qeagle88@gmail.com

Notice: Availability of past issues of the E-Gobrecht

Through the generosity of Gerry Fortin, the previous issues of the *E-Gobrecht* are readily accessible on his seated dime website at <http://www.seateddimevarieties.com/LSCC.htm>

Advertisements

Rare Coins for Sale: Since 1979, David Lawrence Rare Coins has specialized in Seated and Barber coinage for collectors. Please visit our web site for 6,000+ offerings of U.S. & World coins, currency, and stamps for sale and auction. We are also interested in buying or selling your coins at auction. <http://www.davidlawrence.com> or phone 1-800-776-0560, members: PNG, ANA (life), FUN, CSNS

Liberty Seated Quarter Cuds & Rotated Dies

Wanted: Other U.S. series of interest as well. Please reply directly to Paul Kluth @ pcmdmp@msn.com or to the e-mail address of the *E-Gobrecht* newsletter.

Rotated Reverse Seated Dimes Wanted: I am

looking for rotated reverse Liberty Seated dimes. Any interested parties can email Jason Feldman at jason@seated.org

Wanted to Buy: Nice, problem-free bust and seated material. We specialize in affordable collector coins. Puro's Coins and Jewelry, web: www.vtcoins.com, email: puro@vtcoins.com, phone: 1-800-655-1327.

Seated Dime Die Varieties Wanted: I am paying high prices for Seated Dimes with major cuds, die cracks, and rotated reverses. Contact David Thomas at davethomas333@hotmail.com or 1-949-929-2830.



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Mark your calendar !

2008

- 35th Anniversary of the LSCC - 2008
- *Gobrecht Journal* Issue # 103 postal mailed - mid-November 2008
- LSCC Regional meeting - Friday, November 21, 2008, 9 AM, Baltimore Convention Center, room 301.
- Deadline for 2009 Hall of Fame nominations - December 31, 2008

LSCC Dues

If you haven't done so already, send in your club dues to the LSCC Secretary/Treasurer!

LSCC Pledge

To encourage, promote, and dispense numismatic knowledge of the Liberty Seated coins; to cultivate fraternal relations among its members and all those interested in the science of numismatics.

LSCC Membership Information. Dues are \$20 per year and include three issues of the *Gobrecht Journal*, an award winning numismatic publication. To join the Liberty Seated Collectors Club, for *Gobrecht Journal* mailing address changes, or for other membership questions, correspond with the LSCC Secretary.

Articles, comments, or advertisements for publication in the *Gobrecht Journal* may be addressed to the LSCC President.

Information, input, comments, or suggestions for improvements to this *E-Gobrecht* are actively solicited from anyone and may be sent to the Editor, *E-Gobrecht*.

To be added or removed from the *E-Gobrecht mailing list*, send an email message with the words "Subscribe/Unsubscribe" in the subject line of the message to: wb8cpy@arrl.net.

Wanted: Material for this newsletter!

Please consider submitting something for print. It need not be elaborate; it can be something as simple as a short note on your favorite variety, neat find, nice cherry pick, happenings at a coin show, rare Liberty Seated coinage coming up for auction, etc. If you are interested in it, rest assured, others will be too! Sharing information is a goal of this newsletter and you need not be an experienced or famous writer to submit something. This is a continuing plea.

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